

In the claims:

Please amend claims 1-30 to read as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method ~~Process~~ for improving the physicochemical properties of bitumen, comprising adding ~~characterized in that~~ a sufficient amount of polymer powder to the bitumen compositions, the said powder having a particle diameter of between 1 and 150 μm .

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to claim 1, characterized in that the polymer powder is prepared from at least one ethylenically unsaturated monomer, which may be chosen from styrene, butadiene, C₁-C₁₂ alkyl acrylic and/or methacrylic esters, vinyl esters, acrylamide and/or methacrylamide, and C₁-C₁₂ alkyl derivatives thereof.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~claims 1 and~~ 2, characterized in that the polymer powder is prepared from monomer comprising at least styrene and butadiene.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to~~ 3, characterized in that the polymer powder is prepared from at least one additional monomer containing one or more functional group(s) chosen from carboxyl, acid anhydride, hydroxyl, amide, amino and glycidyl groups.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to~~ 4, characterized in that the polymer powder is prepared from at least one additional monomer chosen from acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, fumaric acid, itaconic acid, crotonic acid, maleic acid, maleic anhydride, mesaconic acid and glutaconic acid, or mixtures thereof.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to~~ 5, characterized in that the polymer powder is prepared from at least styrene, butadiene and acrylic acid monomers.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to~~ 6, characterized in that the polymer powder is prepared from a mixture of monomers comprising 92% to 99.9% by weight of at least one ethylenically unsaturated monomer, and 0.1% to 8% and more particularly 2% to 5% by weight of at least one monomer containing a carboxylic function.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~, characterized in that the polymer powder is prepared from a mixture of ethylenically unsaturated monomers chosen so as to obtain a polymer with a glass transition temperature of between -40°C and +35°C.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to claim 8, characterized in that the glass transition temperature is between -40°C and +5°C.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~either of claims 8 and 9~~, characterized in that the glass transition temperature is between -40°C and +1°C.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~, characterized in that the polymer powder also contains a sufficient amount of a polypeptide containing from 2 to 100 amino acids.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to claim 11, characterized in that the polypeptide is chosen from sodium glutamate, sodium aspartate and sodium hydroxyglutamate.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~either of claims 11 and 12~~, characterized in that the polypeptide is incorporated in an amount of between 2 and 40 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of polymer powder.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 13~~, characterized in that the polymer powder also contains a sufficient amount of a water-soluble compound (C) chosen from sugars and derivatives thereof and/or polyelectrolytes belonging to the family of weak polyacids.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 14~~, characterized in that the polymer powder also contains a sufficient amount of an amino acid (D) or derivatives thereof.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to claim 15, characterized in that the amino acid (D) or derivatives thereof are chosen from arginine, lysine, histidine,

glutamic acid, aspartic acid, hydroxyglutamic acid, sodium glutamate, sodium aspartate and sodium hydroxyglutamate.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 16~~, characterized in that the polymer powder also contains a sufficient amount of a powdered mineral filler (F) with a particle size of less than 20 μm .

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 16~~, characterized in that the amount of polymer powder introduced into the bitumen composition is between 0.5% and 20% by weight of dry powder relative to the weight of the bitumen composition.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to claim 18, characterized in that the amount of polymer powder introduced into the bitumen composition is between 0.5% and 10% by weight of dry powder relative to the weight of the bitumen composition.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~either of claims 18 and 19~~, characterized in that the amount of polymer powder introduced into the bitumen composition is between 0.5% and 3% by weight of dry powder relative to the weight of the bitumen composition.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 20~~, characterized in that the bitumen is chosen from natural bitumens, pyrobitumens and artificial bitumens, or mixtures thereof.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to claim 21, characterized in that the bitumen is chosen from asphalt and maltha.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to ~~either of claims 21 and 22~~, characterized in that the bitumen chosen is asphalt.

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ for improving the physicochemical properties of the bitumen composition, comprising the following steps:

1- The bitumen composition is heated to a temperature of between 140 and 190°C;

2- A sufficient amount of polymer powder with a particle size of between 1 and 150 μ m is added to the bitumen composition of step 1 with stirring.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): Bitumen composition ~~that may be obtained~~ produced by the process according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 24~~.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ for preparing hot mixes according to claim 24, ~~characterized in that the process according to claim 24 is carried out, to which is added a further comprising the step of~~ additional to the preceding process, which consists in adding, with stirring and at a temperature of between 140 and 190°C, aggregates to the bitumen composition.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ The method for preparing cold mixes, comprising the following steps:

1- a sufficient amount of polymer powder is incorporated into a bitumen emulsion with stirring at room temperature;

2- the emulsion obtained in step (1) is spread onto a road to obtain a uniform layer of the mixture obtained in step (1);

3- the aggregates and fillers are spread on top of the layer obtained in step (2), in the form of a uniform layer;

4- the bitumen emulsion is broken.

Claim 28 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to claim 27, characterized in that the amount of polymer powder introduced into the bitumen composition is between 0.5% and 20% by weight of dry powder relative to the weight of the bitumen composition.

Claim 29 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according claim 28, characterized in that the amount of polymer powder introduced into the bitumen composition is between 0.5% and 10% by weight of dry powder relative to the weight of the bitumen composition.

Claim 30 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Process~~ according to either of ~~claims 28 and~~ 29, characterized in that the amount of polymer powder introduced into the bitumen composition is

between 0.5% and 3% by weight of dry powder relative to the weight of the bitumen composition.